

Kindly take a moment to study MISHNAS CHAYIM in the merit of
Rivkah *bas* Shlomoh A”H
a fellow Jew who passed away with no relatives to arrange Torah study on behalf of her *neshamah*.

Rumination Revisited

The Future of *Mitzvos* and the Problem with Pigs

One of the tenets of faith which a Jew is obligated to believe in is that of *techiyas hameisim*, the future resurrection of the dead. The Mishnah reveals that the obligation is even more encompassing:

“The following people forfeit their share in the World to Come: One who denies that *techiyas hameisim* has a Biblical source...” (*Sanhedrin 11:1*)

Apparently, in addition to believing in the truth of the eventual resurrection, one must also acknowledge that it is recorded in the Torah.

Where exactly *does* the Torah speak of *techiyas hameisim*? The Gemara in Sanhedrin 90b infers it from the section in Parshas Korach which deals with laws associated with tithing produce and the like. The verse in Bamidbar 18:28 states that the *terumah* is to be given to Aharon the *Kohen*.

“Wait just a second,” the Gemara wants to know. “These *mitzvos* don’t begin to become obligatory until the Jews enter into *Eretz Yisrael*. Aharon passed away in the wilderness, *prior* to the Jews’ entry into the Promised Land. So, how are they supposed to give the *terumah* to Aharon?”

The Gemara then completes the logical deduction. “This is the Biblical source that, in the future, the dead will arise.” At that point — when Aharon will be resurrected — the Jewish people will give their *terumah* directly to him.

This informative passage is significant for another reason as well, as it appears to shed light on another fundamental issue: the status of *mitzvah* observance in the future era. Indeed, the fact that Jews will have to give their *terumah* to Aharon during the resurrection era seems to be a clear indication that the obligation to fulfill the *mitzvos* of the Torah will be in full force at that time. This, in fact, is the stated opinion of the Rashba (*Niddah 61b*).

However, this notion seems to be contradicted by another statement of Chazal concerning a much different subject: pigs. The problem arises when the Medrash explains the meaning of *chazir*, the word for pig in *lashon hakodesh*. As the Medrash (quoted by the Ritva to Kiddushin 49b) states:

“Why is this animal called *chazir*? (The root of *chazir* is *ch,z,r*, to return.) Because, in the future, Hashem will ‘return’ it to Yisrael (i.e., they will be permitted to eat it).”

If all *mitzvos* will remain in effect at that time, how are we to understand the claim of the Medrash that pork will no longer be forbidden? To clarify this point, it is necessary to re-examine the whole notion of kosher animals.

The Inside Story of Digestion

Our *parshah* (*Devarim 14:3-8*) lists the criteria of kosher animals, one of which is rumination (cud-chewing). In a most enlightening piece, the Chasam Sofer (*Toras Moshe to Devarim 14:8*) attempts to explain why animals lacking this characteristic are not considered fit to be eaten. He reveals that amongst the underlying reasons for this law are actual health considerations. Apparently, the manner in which a particular animal digests its food is an indication of the overall wholesomeness of its flesh.

(It should be noted that this particular commentary of the Chasam Sofer raises many intriguing issues touching on numerous topics ranging from physiology to ideology. It is well beyond the scope of this particular forum to properly address them. For the purposes of this piece, suffice it to say that, given the towering stature of the Chasam Sofer, he was well aware of these issues; the fact that he did not desist from promulgating these *divrei Torah* testifies that he was also aware of their resolution.)

Why do certain animals need to chew their cud while others do not? Evidently, when it comes to digesting your food, bulkiness is the key. Animals (take a hippo, for instance) who are dense and bulky, possess the necessary brawn to process their food all in one shot. Creatures that are more ‘dainty’ by nature, however, lack sufficient mass to work through their entire supper intake on the first try. They have to give it another couple of whirls, digesting their meal in a graduated manner.

In short, what goes on in the belly is a good indicator of the density of its owner. Non-ruminators are generally obese; hence, their flesh is too massive to be considered healthy. Those who chew their cud, on the other hand, are weaker by nature, and so their flesh is lean enough to be compatible with the consumption habits and processes of human beings.

The Pig of the Future

Armed with this eye-opening insight, we can now return to the seemingly contradictory statements of *Chazal*. It is apparent that *mitzvos* will be obligatory in the post-redemption era as they are today. If so, how will it be possible for the kosher (*fleishige*) restaurants of the future to incorporate ham onto the menu?

The Chasam Sofer explains that, indeed, there is no contradiction, and no *mitzvah* will be uprooted in the future. The intent of the Medrash that pig will be cleared for consumption is that Hashem will simply ‘*kasher*’ the pig: not by changing the prohibition, but by changing the pig. Today’s swine don’t chew their cud because — frankly — they are big,

grubby *beheimas*. As such, they don't need to chew their cud. In the glorious futuristic era, Hashem will purify the pig's nature, granting it a more 'refined' makeup. In order to be able to properly digest its food then, it will have to resort to rumination.

In other words, the happy end of the story will be that non-ruminators will of course remain off-limits. Only the reformed pig will become a cud-chewer himself.